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ABSTRACT

In October 1998, the Coordinating Board Committee of the Department of Education at the University of Texas--Pan American (UTPA) recommended adoption of a problem-based learning model for use in the university's stand-alone doctoral program in educational administration. This recommendation came despite some apprehension and confusion among some board members. Subsequent work by the committee produced a plan employing educational labs where problem-based learning could take place. Curriculum and instruction professors preferred an observer role for doctoral students in bilingual-education labs, and some students and faculty were confused about their roles. These concerns persisted despite seemingly successful use of daily feedback, block-time arrangements in classroom scheduling, and constructive discussion among all parties. Many students and faculty did express concern about presenting content under block scheduling. One widely circulated email expressed an expectation that students be actively taught, the need for in-depth instruction in research design and methodology, a desire to receive dissertation-writing skills, apprehension regarding peer evaluation, and clarification about available resources. The dean demanded changes in content and scheduling to better meet the students' needs. Limited positive results arising from the problem-based learning program included such areas as feedback, collaborative networks, leadership teams, two-way bilingual education, action research, readings, portfolios, journal keeping, mental health, classroom structure, and curriculum, content, university relations, public relations, program approval, and conference presentations. Future experimentation and discussion should address problems that merit attention and that build on the established successes of the program. (Contains 14 references.) (TEJ)

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A paper presented at the August, 1999 Annual Meting of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration in Jackson Hole, Wyoming

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An Attempt at Problem-Based Learning

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The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) had been trying to obtain approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer a stand-alone doctoral program in educational leadership for five years. The UTPA leadership had gone through a process of working jointly with the University of Texas at Austin (UT) in offering a cooperative degree but their desire was to achieve independent status. In order to meet one of the criteria required for a stand-alone program, the university had to have professors on their staff who had extensive experience in doctoral programs, directing dissertations, and substantial publication records. The College of Education decided to employ two full-time and one quarter-time persons who met these requirements. One person employed came to the university and spent full time starting September, 1998 and was named new director of the doctoral program; one of the persons only came to the university on three occasions during the semester from Colorado where he lived. He maintained contact with the students via E-mail and telephone and when he was on campus held individual conferences and small group meetings. He did not attend any of the doctoral faculty planning sessions until early Spring 1999 when some crucial issues were being addressed. The part-time person from UT was regularly in attendance during class sessions and was available to participate in planning sessions with the doctoral faculty.

Two other persons made up the doctoral faculty, a research professor from educational psychology and a professor of educational administration (previous director of the doctoral program) making a total of four and one-fourth persons that were involved in instruction initially. A fifth professor, the director of the Center for Applied Research in Education, met regularly with the doctoral faculty in its planning sessions. During the Fall of 1998, classes were held thirteen times utilizing a block-of-time format on Friday evenings and Saturdays. Ninety contact hours were scheduled in formal class sessions and sixty hours were expected to be spent in the

field in educational labs and lab related activities for nine semester hours of credit.

The cooperative doctoral program had three directors over the five-year period in which UT-Pan Am worked toward independent status. The last director previous to the new hire in 1998 (the educational administration professor mentioned earlier) was made director in 1997 as the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board continued its consideration of the doctoral program. It was the dean's plan to replace this former director with a new director and to allow this former director to direct a program that would include doctoral students who would be receiving scholarships from the Kellogg Foundation in order to attend school full time. The new director worked with the college on a consulting basis during the Summer of 1998 helping to develop plans to obtain final approval from the Coordinating Board for the doctoral program.

The former director of the program had made available to the doctoral faculty copies of the Peabody Journal of Education (Glasman, 1997), "New Ways of Training for School Leadership" to read as the faculty thought about completing the task of obtaining approval for the program. In the Peabody Journal there is a chapter by Edwin M. Bridges and Phillip Hallinger from Stanford University entitled "Using Problem-Based Learning to Prepare Educational Leaders" (pp. 131-146). The new director read the chapter as well as a chapter in the same book, "Reflections on Solving the Problem of Training Educational Leaders," wherein the author, James H. Block, University of California at Santa Barbara, critiqued all of the training approaches in the book and commended problem-based learning in his writing as follows:

> Is there any way to make these and other tries at the training of educational leaders more successful in the learning-teaching arena in the future? I believe the answer is a resounding *yes* and that at least one key to that success can be found in this issue in the elegant work of Bridges and Hallinger on problem-based learning (PBL). From the description given, PBL is superb and turns out precisely my kind of educational leaders. It contains an image of learning that is student centered, and, consequently, it focuses clearly on learning, in an explicit manner and with due attention to matters of both skill and will to lead. Moreover, PBL's transfer-of-training model directly teaches its students for the transfer of learning. (Block, 1997, p. 176).

The concept of problem-based learning seemed to be a good one for the new doctoral staff

to consider for the new program. The visiting committees that had come to UTPA over the years studying the plans for the doctoral program had encouraged the staff to think innovatively and create a program that would be different and hopefully better for the training of educational leaders. When the July, 1998 visiting committee came, the notion of problem-based learning was discussed and the committee encouraged the staff to pursue the idea as well as others that would keep the program from being so traditional. Some of the guiding points from the visiting committee's visit and analysis of UT-Pan Am's proposal for a doctoral program (Gonzalez, et al, 1998) included the following:

1. A curriculum redesigned to meet the unique needs of the Valley population
2. A problem-based approach to change and innovation
3. An emphasis on applied and action research as part of a problem-based approach
4. Course titles and content to reflect contemporary issues in educational leadership/less abstract in nature
5. Being especially careful not to rely on archaic notions of what those terms [knowledge base of educational administration and leadership] encompass
6. A great program created with its own niche, one that is unique to the Rio Grande Valley
7. Clinical experiences provided that are sufficiently broad to enhance new learning in new and different settings; hence, that at least part of the experience is outside their [the doctoral students'] current positions.

The visiting committee was composed of Josue M. Gonzalez from Arizona State University, Kristy Hebert from Hugh B. Bain Middle School, Rhode Island, and Cecil Miskel from the University of Michigan.

During the Summer of 1998, the new director asked the doctoral faculty to read the chapter from the Peabody Journal and discuss it. One day the doctoral faculty spent an hour discussing the concept of problem-based learning. The new director was not sure that any of the faculty had read the chapter although at least one of them had scanned the book. In the deliberations the doctoral faculty discussed the idea of developing the doctoral program around the problem-based learning concept and no major resistance was encountered. In subsequent meetings, the quarter-time faculty member did express support for PBL with reservations, noting that other strategies were also needed for a well structured program.

As the faculty developed the materials to submit to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for approval, the concept of problem-based learning was included as one major component of the program. It was suggested that this approach would help the program be unique and that it would help the program be relevant to the needs of the students. When the Coordinating Board sent a committee of board members and staff persons to visit the university for a final review, one of the concerns that some of the members raised was about the notion of problem-based learning. It was difficult for some of the members to understand what it meant and they had reservations about us using the concept in the program. When it was all said and done however, the Coordinating Board Committee recommended and the full Board approved the stand-alone doctoral program for UTPA on October 22, 1998. After five years of seeking approval, the effort had finally been successful.

The new director's knowledge of problem-based learning was increased while attending presentations on the subject at the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration held in Juneau, Alaska in August, 1998. Two professors from the University of Indiana at South Bend presented a paper entitled, "Adventures in Problem-Based Learning". The new director heard the presentation and then carefully read the paper they provided. During the Fall, 1998 semester with the first cohort of doctoral students, the new director made the paper as well as the Peabody Journal chapters available to the doctoral students to read. In the paper, the authors begin by quoting one of their students as saying "I haven't learned anything in this program yet. Teach me something!". This came after the student had spent eighteen months in the university's school leadership program. The doctoral faculty was later to reap similar responses from some of the students at UTPA after only one semester.

The next event that occurred in the development of the doctoral program included the use of two consultants from the University of Colorado at Denver, Dr. Michael Martin and Dr. Michael Murphy. Dr. Martin is the President-elect of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration and Dr. Murphy has served as a professor in the department of educational administration and as provost at the University of Colorado at Denver. Both have

had a long history in the development of quality doctoral programs for educational leadership and have published extensively about their experiences (Ford, Martin, Murphy, and Muth, 1996). The two professors were brought to UTPA for a two-day workshop the latter part of August, 1998 during which they outlined the highlights of their program at the University of Colorado at Denver. The UTPA dean, some faculty members of the doctoral program, and some professors from the department of curriculum and instruction participated in the two-day workshop. The former director of the doctoral program, who is a current member of the doctoral faculty, did not participate to any great extent and the consultants indicated to the new director at the time that we probably would have some difficulty implementing the concepts they were talking about with this individual. The need for further planning and more input from these experienced consultants during the 1998-99 year was discussed, but not implemented. The former director was not supportive of using the University of Colorado consultants but favored using consultants from New Mexico who had experience in developing programs for Hispanic students.

One of the things that professors Murphy and Martin talked about in their program was the use of educational labs. The "lab" conceptualized as a learning vehicle and problem-based learning are intrinsically intertwined. The "lab" provides a situation, a condition, or a place where problem-based learning blossoms (based on Barrows and Tamblyn, 1980). It was also emphasized as a vehicle for experience with action or applied research.

We, the dean and the others involved, thought this was a good idea and decided to incorporate it into our program along with problem-based learning. We organized our students into teams and assigned them to two-way bilingual education laboratories in four different school districts. The problem we gave the students to work on was as follows:

> There are ten interventions (Estes, 1995) that need to be put in place if an institution is to maximize the use of an innovation. Students are to study the implementation of two-way bilingual education in their Educational Leadership Laboratory and make recommendations regarding the use of one or more of the interventions.

The new director wanted the students to investigate this problem and in the process to serve as external facilitators (Estes, 1995) rendering appropriate assistance to the schools. He

believed that such an approach was in keeping with the philosophy, vision and mission that the doctoral faculty had developed for the program. These are quoted below:

1. **Philosophy:**

   The University of Texas-Pan American Educational Leadership Doctoral Program has been developed based on the UTPA philosophy that the needs of the South Texas school communities are unique and, that such needs must be addressed through innovative and dynamic means that are educationally and culturally appropriate.
   We believe that the highest quality of educational opportunity must be available to all students. We believe that we must create learning systems which are culturally valid for South Texas. We believe that policies and practices require change and that this change will occur through the efforts of leaders who are forceful advocates for the improvement of educational programs.
   We believe that the creation of new knowledge will influence the development of high achieving institutions or learning systems that are necessary for the improved economic and social development of South Texas.

2. **Vision:**

   Through the leadership of graduates from The University of Texas-Pan American Educational Leadership Doctoral Program, the quality of life in South Texas will be recreated by transformed educational institutions of the highest quality that are clearly responsive to the cultural and linguistic environments of the region.

3. **Mission:**

   To prepare leaders who will change educational policy and practice to serve the best interests of all learners in South Texas.

We participated in the two-way bilingual education labs in cooperation with bilingual education professors from the department of curriculum and instruction. The professors in this department had developed the two-way bilingual education concept at UT-Pan Am, had secured project funding for selected schools, served as consultants to the schools implementing the innovation, and had different expectations for the doctoral students going into the labs than the new director of the doctoral program did. The director of the two-way bilingual project expressed early on to students and faculty his concerns about doctoral students taking initiatives in lab sites. He and the other C & I professors were not particularly interested in the doctoral students serving as external facilitators but rather preferred that the doctoral students only go in

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as observers. This difference in expectations between us created some difficulties for some of the students in performing their role in the project. The former director of the doctoral program also raised questions about the roles and preparation of students for involvement in the project, indicated on several occasions that he did not understand the effort, and the team to which he was assigned had difficulty in executing its role in a comfortable fashion. Considerable discussion ensued from one class to the other about the role of doctoral students in the labs and the confusion the doctoral students were encountering in understanding what and how to do. Even so, most teams were accepted, found ways to be useful on-site and gained new insights about bilingual education and the change process.

In addition to work in the educational labs which were in school districts different from the districts they were employed in, we wanted the students to implement a problem-based learning project in their own schools and to carry it out and examine it and report on it from an action research based point of view. We read and discussed in class ASCD's publication entitled How To Use Problem-Based Learning in the Classroom (Delisle, 1997) and How To Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School (Calhoun, 1994). One of the doctoral students also found a publication, Action Research: An Educational Leader's Guide to School Improvement (Glanz, 1998) and recommended its use to other students. We had wanted the students, in doing the problem-based learning project in their schools and reporting on them using an action research format, to think in terms of using their findings to develop a proposal to submit to AERA for a potential presentation in the year 2000. Such proposals would have been due August, 1999. The students identified important problems in their schools and had begun to work on them as the semester progressed. However, it slowly came to be realized that students as full-time employees were somewhat over whelmed by so many varied assignments all in a single semester.

During each class session we had the students evaluate each particular event that occurred during the class period. For the most part, the various events that were scheduled consistently received very high evaluation marks. At the end of the semester, we scheduled individual reviews with students by three professors and a member of the doctoral program advisory council. The

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dean participated in one of these. The feedback provided by the students was uniformly positive, even though some suggestions for improvements were made. These individual reviews (sometimes referred to as "evaluations") were informal with each student sharing his/her notebook documenting his/her work. However, no formal anonymous evaluation of labs, action research, and other assignments was undertaken.

Nature of Class Sessions

Another thing we tried to do in the beginning of the program was to use a block-of-time schedule for class sessions. We met on Friday evenings from 4:30 to 9:00 P.M. and on Saturdays from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. for a total of ninety contact hours during the semester. In each case, we had several professors available for each of the sessions. An agenda was built showing the titles of the presentations and the amount of time that each instructor had on the program during the session. These agendas were reviewed and modified in advance of class by the doctoral faculty and on most occasions, the new director would go over them with the dean. As director of the program, he acted as chair-person for the sessions, monitored the schedule and when a presenter's time was finished he would call time and go on to the next subject. This bothered some of the students as they felt that some given instructor would be presenting information of extreme interest to them and the new director would cut them off and go on to the next scheduled topic. Our objective in the block-of-time arrangement was to try to integrate the instruction and the content in meaningful and relevant ways and to establish a forum in which students could enhance their educational leadership skills. At the end of the semester the dean felt that insufficient time was given to content such as quantitative research and theories of organization. The new director and the quarter-time professor felt that a broad array of content had been delivered and that the students had profited from the experience.

One of the difficulties for instruction that we encountered was with the professor that was located in Colorado. He was not present to participate in the instruction or in the planning meetings of the doctoral faculty. This was not his fault for he lived up to the contract he signed with the dean in terms of the number of trips he was to make to Texas. The professor on

quarter-time assignment was involved in pre-planning of all sessions but required by virtue of flight schedules to leave early every Saturday afternoon. We had thirteen sessions during the fall semester and the "Colorado" professor was in town for three of these. During the time that he was in town, he shared that session's time with other professors as well. Most of this instructor's work was via E-mail and in special tutorial sessions held outside the regular class schedule. At the end of the Fall semester when it came time to evaluate the professors assigned to the doctoral program, the students became aware that he was one person for which they had paid tuition from whom they had received very little formal class instruction. They naturally felt short changed by this event. He is a quality professor of research and the students were inordinately interested in learning how to begin their dissertations early in the program.

The last Saturday of classes for the Fall, 1998 semester, the new director had the students talk about their experience during the semester and discuss things that we learned and that we could have improved upon. Several items were mentioned during the discussion and one of the students indicated that the group met the evening before and had talked about several concerns they had about the program and that they were planning to put their concerns in writing. The spokesperson for the group mentioned that many of the things that they had concerns about had been discussed during the Saturday morning session. The conversation among the professors and the students was amicable, rapport seemed to be good, climate seemed to be positive, it appeared to be a good learning experience, and the quarter-time professor, a forty-year veteran from UT, and the new director had come away from the session proud of the job that they had done during the first semester of the new doctoral program even while acknowledging the validity of many student expressed concerns.

A Dissenting View

As it turned out, this was not exactly the evaluation that the dean received from some of the students and some of the faculty. Some of the faculty were concerned about the amount of time they had to present their content in the block-of-time arrangement we were following. One of the students put the concerns discussed on Friday evening in writing and sent them via E-mail

to the new director with a copy to the dean. There was some disagreement among the students about the wording of some of the concerns after the E-mail was distributed. Several of the students indicated that after the Saturday morning discussion, their concerns had been addressed. Some of the points from the E-mail that was sent appear below:

1. We expect to be taught in more than just a workshop setting and by people who know the content.
2. We have identified an urgent need for in-depth instruction---more than a day or part of a day--in research design and methodology and developing the review of the literature (How do we do it? What does it look like? Where do we search? Which are the reputable journals? Are there certain research indexes we should look at?, etc.)
3. Address the skills we will need to write our dissertations. We need guidance and structure. To date we have not seen what a dissertation looks like, the format it should have, number of chapters included, what each chapter addresses. We have not discussed with much detail the process we should use to define a problem.
4. We feel very strongly against evaluating each other's performance or growth. We want to establish camaraderie between and among each other. We feel that evaluating each other will foster feelings of animosity, suspicion, and distrust among ourselves.
5. We need clarification on the facilities and services available to us through the Center for Applied Research in Education (CARE) office.

On Sunday following the last Saturday session, the dean indicated that six students had called her about the experiences that the students had during the semester. The dean talked with the new director on Monday following her Sunday telephone calls. One of the things that she talked about was the absence policy that the new director had implemented. The new director had indicated to students at the beginning of the semester that he wanted them to be sure to attend, to only miss class if there was an emergency, but if they had to miss, regardless of the reason, he wanted them to make up their time on campus. He had used this flexible attendance approach in previous universities where he had worked. Some of the students did not seem to remember that he had discussed this policy at the beginning of the semester.

Another item the dean talked to the new director about was the students' view that a lot of time was spent during the block-of-time sessions in which learning did not occur. The new director thought the comment might be related to the time spent discussing and trying to clarify

the role of the students in the labs. We did have to spend a lot of time on that subject because there was a great deal of concern on the part of the students about their role, but it was also a time in which learning surely occurred.

Another point that was made both in the Saturday morning class discussion and in the telephone conversations with the dean was that we gave too much attention to quantity and insufficient attention to dealing with concepts in depth in the class sessions. This may have some merit because we did schedule and do a large number of things and it might have been better to have concentrated on fewer items and dealt with them in greater detail. We agreed with the students on this point during the discussion on the last Saturday morning.

Still another point that was made was that students "weren't being taught." This seems to refer to the professor who lives in Colorado not being present to teach. It also refers to other professors who were present during the block-of-time sessions who entered into discussions and yet did not have an opportunity to spend much time in formal lecture presentations. It also applies to the new director for there wasn't much time on the agendas for him to participate in formal instruction, however, his responsibility for the fall was the problems course for which the students were registered. This was not designed for him to provide extensive lectures. The dean indicated the new director was not employed to be a "gatekeeper" over the presenters that were included on the agenda. The agendas, however, were developed by the doctoral faculty and the new director merely implemented the plans approved by the faculty.

Based on the telephone conversations and the E-mail, the dean indicated that the students need instruction, they need foundations, that it was an injustice what we were doing to the students. The dean indicated that a program should not be as frustrating as ours had been the first semester. She indicated that we would have to change the program, that we were taking an ineffective route in its development. She stated that people had paid for instruction and that we would have to provide this during the second semester. She insisted that the "block arrangement" be abandoned in favor of three separate courses, each with an individual instructor in charge. She said that the instruction the students received during the fall was superficial and not in depth.

Early in the spring semester, the new director suggested to the dean that members of the visiting team come back in to review implementation, but this idea was not accepted.

Some Positive Results

Educational Labs. Of the four teams organized to participate in the educational labs, all of them got off to a very good start. They organized visits to schools and interviews with staff. They observed in classrooms and collected data that schools suggested would be valuable. Difficulties only arose when some teams received conflicting instructions from different professors. This created confusion and raised doubts and concerns about the roles team members were wanting to play. Discussions of team activities, progress reports, and work sessions for teams were built into class sessions. Attending to these areas and concerns in class kept us from agenda items that had been planned.

Collaborative Network

We organized the educational lab schools into a collaborative network and met monthly with the school staffs and the doctoral students. The purposes of the meetings were to share successful implementation practices across school districts and to share insights developed by the doctoral students from their observations and data collection. We had good attendance from school personnel for the first two meetings held at UTPA but when we moved the meetings to different school district sites, attendance from school representatives dwindled. The doctoral students and some bilingual education professors were present for all meetings. We felt the organization of the collaborative network was in keeping with the mission of the doctoral program:

> To prepare leaders who will change educational policy and practice to serve the best interests of all learners in South Texas.

Leadership Teams. We had plans for the doctoral students to encourage the schools to develop leadership teams on each campus and for the doctoral students to serve on these leadership teams. We believed the use of campus leadership teams could further enhance the implementation of the two-way bilingual education innovation and could increase our

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understanding of the change process and thus continue to enhance the accomplishment of the mission of the doctoral program.

Two-Way Bilingual Education. We learned about two-way bilingual education. Two-way bilingual education involves the teaching of content in English one day and in Spanish the next. We provided a large amount of reading material on the subject (we thought of this as important content) and one of the bilingual professors lectured for two hours on the topic during one of our class sessions. The educational labs were located in the schools that were implementing two-way bilingual education.

Action Research. Students identified some very important problems to study in their individual schools and apply action research principles. During some class discussions, the students were able to clarify their studies under the tutelage of the research professor from Colorado.

We had to eliminate the educational labs, the collaborative network, the plans for the leadership teams and the action research projects the second semester when we were required to organize the program into three discrete courses with individual professors assigned. Students simply did not have time to give attention to these areas with three, separate, uncoordinated, and unintegrated classes.

Readings. We read and discussed two ASCD publications: "How to Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School" and How to Use Problem-Based Learning in the Classroom. We read and discussed several papers and chapters on problem-based learning. We learned about the role of external facilitators in implementing change. We had an expert on change, Dr. Shirley Hord, of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, consult with us on a Friday evening and Saturday morning. Some of us thought of these areas as important content.

Portfolios and Reflective Journals. Two C&I professors helped us learn about the use of portfolios and reflective journal writing. Students developed their portfolios and wrote reflections about their experiences. These materials were shared during individual student

reviews conducted by three professors and a member of the Doctoral Program Task Force at the end of the fall semester. Students have not given much attention to these areas under the spring semester organization of the curriculum and two of the doctoral faculty proposed the elimination of the student reviews; one of them stating that it is an inefficient use of time.

Mental Health. We tried to be sensitive to students' mental health. We wanted to help them learn how to cope with full-time jobs, family responsibilities and doctoral study. We had an educational psychology professor meet with us for approximately one-half hour at the end of most of our Saturday sessions. He shared materials and talked about various dimensions of mental health. This practice has been discontinued during the spring semester.

Structure. We provided structure for the formal class sessions. The evenings and days were carefully planned. The dean was critical of this approach calling it "gate keeping", but students are reporting in the spring semester that they miss the carefully planned program followed in the fall.

Curriculum. We developed a curriculum for the doctoral program that focused on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium National Standards that were prepared under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers in 1996. We decided that the program outcomes for doctoral study should produce educational leaders that would be able to promote changes that contribute to improving the learning for all students by meeting the following standards:

Standard I - VISION Facilitating and enhancing the development of shared visions for high quality education.

Standard II - CULTURE Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture conducive to optimum student learning.

Standard III - PROFESSIONAL/STAFF DEVELOPMENT Advocating, nurturing and sustaining continuing professional development for all staff personnel.

Standard IV - LEARNING ENVIRONMENT Ensuring the management of organizations and operations for safe and effective learning environments.

Grande Valley". Also, one day during lunch we took the time to go to the local County Historical Museum to see an art display entitled "Borderlands: The Heritage of the Lower Rio Grande Valley through the Art of Jose Cisneros".

Content. The educational administration professor on the doctoral faculty also provided reading material and lectured on the following topics during the semester: Images of Organization, Organizational Theory, Post Structuralism in Educational Research, The Culture of Organization and Change, Leadership, and Structure and Functions of Organizations. To the professor's credit, he made some effort to relate his lectures and assignments to the experiences the students were having in the educational leadership labs.

University Relations. In order to become acquainted with the upper administration of the university and to have these administrators become more knowledgeable about our program, we invited the president and two vice-presidents to speak to our cohort and to answer questions. These were interesting and meaningful to the students.

Public Relations. In order to let people know more about the group of students we had recruited for our first doctoral cohort, we developed a color brochure containing the picture and personal and professional information about each student. We had these brochures available when the coordinating board committee came to visit the program in view of considering approval. We also made the brochures available to the doctoral program task force during its initial meeting.

Doctoral Program Approval. We got the stand-alone doctoral program approved. We prepared materials and met with the visiting committee and the coordinating board committee. We helped develop agendas for their visits that would be agreeable to them. We participated in the full meeting of the Coordinating Board in Austin, Texas when the program was approved.

National and International Presentations. Two of the professors made presentations at the Conference within a Conference at AASA in February, 1999 in New Orleans on UTPA's use of problem-based learning and assessment center. Proposals for participation on the program were peer reviewed and only approximately twenty-five were accepted from a total of

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approximately 175 that were submitted. One professor made a presentation in Spanish on problem-based learning at an international conference in Ciudad Victoria, Mexico.

A proposal about the use of problem-based learning at UTPA has been accepted by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration as a presentation during its conference in August, 1999. Proposals are peer reviewed for selection.

Given the foregoing experience, the following are problems that merit attention and things we attempted to do right:

Problems That Merit Attention:

1. Attempted to do too many things too soon. Over-loaded the students with the development of portfolios, reflective journals, action research, participation in two-way bilingual education, participation in collaborative networks, and a conference in Mexico.
2. The use of educational labs without sufficient time to develop and train the students and professors in the role they were to perform in the labs.
3. The under utilization of the research professor from Colorado when he was in town during class sessions.
4. The anxiety created in the students by some professors urging very early starts on their dissertations while others were encouraging a more exploratory approach.
5. Perhaps, a mismatch between some students' professional goals and a program in educational leadership. We should have been more careful and thorough, during our assessment center to understand students' professional goals and abilities to participate in an innovative, problem-based program.
6. The scheduling of a final exam by the educational administration professor without any prior warning to students. Such an assessment was not included in the syllabus that was approved by the faculty at the beginning of the semester.
7. The arbitrary shelving of the grading plan presented in the syllabus by the educational administration professor and the "Colorado" professor.
8. The emphasis on dissertation proposal planning by some faculty without consultation or planning with others.
9. The insufficient training provided for the development of portfolios, reflective journals, and action research.
10. The director of CARE not given encouragement to join as an instructional member of the doctoral faculty.
11. The discouragement by the dean of the continued involvement of the C & I faculty toward the end of the semester.
12. The major diversion created by the Kellogg grant. We spent so much time trying to develop one doctoral program rather than two, but we were unsuccessful in persuading the director of the Kellogg program to fully

integrate the two programs.

13. Underestimated the importance of having students actively involved in and informed about the emerging structure of the program design as it was still emerging.
14. Did not expect the loss of support from the dean and the swiftness with which she changed the program and the curriculum.
15. Launched the first cohort the first semester with only a limited skeleton of a plan for faculty, students, and the administration to follow. Played catch-up all semester long. In addition, we had to accomplish Coordinating Board approval which occurred mid-semester.
16. Underestimated the need for some faculty members to have more of their content included in the program early on.

What We Attempted To Do Right

1. Involved the dean, selected C&I professors and most of the doctoral faculty in planning the program and reviewing what was to go on in each session.
2. Used an assessment center to identify appropriate participants in the program.
3. Developed a program that was innovative, non-traditional and meaningful and relevant for educational leaders.
4. Used a block-of-time approach to instruction versus scheduled discrete courses.
5. Spent class time on planning the development of portfolios and the use of reflective journal writing.
6. Spent class time on understanding the concept of two-way bilingual education.
7. Involved students and faculty in a curriculum building process identifying pervasive problems as well as concepts, issues and theories related to educational leadership.
8. Participated in an international conference at the Instituto Tamaulipeco de Investigación Educativa y Desarrollo de la Docencia in Ciudad Victoria, Mexico. The doctoral students and the new director of the doctoral program made presentations in Spanish on some of the work that had been done during the semester. PBL received heavy emphasis in some of the presentations. Student reflections were very positive on this experience even though it was not included in the original plans for the fall semester. It was an opportunity that was brought to our attention and we took advantage of it.

Some points from Michael Fullan and Mathew Miles (Fullan and Miles, 1992) are worthy of reflection as a conclusion to this paper. They state that many people reject complex innovations prematurely before they are in a sound position to make such judgments. It may be that certain decisions were made or conclusions drawn concerning our first semester's effort in a

premature manner. Fullan and Miles also state that things hardly ever go easily during change efforts, that any significant change involves a period of intense personal and organizational learning and problem solving. They state that in cases where reform eventually succeeds, things will often go wrong before they go right, that anxieties, difficulties and uncertainty are intrinsic to all successful change.

A final point from Fullan and Miles has to do with risk-taking. They indicate that one can see why a climate that encourages risk-taking is so critical. People will not venture into uncertainty unless there is an appreciation that difficulties encountered are a natural part of the process and if people do not venture into uncertainty, no significant change will occur.

Hopefully, we will be able to implement problem-based learning in appropriate parts of our program in the future. As one student (Reyes, 1999) observed, "I don't believe anyone has given up on the notion of PBL and engaging in a lab experience sometime in our program. It is a major point in our program, but we needed to know more about it in order for it to be successful." She continued, "I think that this journey that we have begun will lead us to PBL...eventually. I also think it is okay if it is later in our program than sooner if the quality of that experience as a result of taking our time will be enhanced."

It may be longer in coming than we might hope. The dean took over the directorship of the program on March 5, 1999 and then re-named the former director as director in a memorandum dated March 12, 1999, but received on March 24, 1999. The person that served as the new director is no longer included in plans to develop the curriculum. Courses that were designed for field work in educational labs, action research and problem-based learning have been eliminated from the curriculum. The work that was done on the curriculum sequence has been shelved. An increased emphasis has been placed on quantitative research, statistics, and traditional school administration courses. The use of portfolios, reflective journals, and twice-a-year student reviews of progress are no longer considered.

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